

Laura Hazelton

From: Paul Crocker <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 30 May 2021 12:06
To: Laura Hazelton; Nick Baxter
Cc: Andrew Maughan; Jennifer Watson
Subject: 111 Frogna

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Dear Ms Hazelton and Mr Baxter.

We are residents at 115 Frogna.

We are writing to support the works carried out and proposed at 111 Frogna.

We have seen all the plans of their repair works and proposed and refused works and art studio. Zoe and Merlin prior to commencing the works shared with me photos of the house, how the rear was badly rebuilt in the 1950/60s in a style that was totally unsympathetic to the historic building and how they were intending to return the house closer to its original aesthetic and design.

The house was on the market for a long time and it needed a new owner with the vision to restore the house to what it is meant to be. Zoe and Merlin have an in depth understanding of their grade two star listed house and their plans to restore it are well designed and include a host of benefits. The existing house had been largely ripped apart and their proposals vastly improve its appearance and amenity.

They have a young family and to have a neighbour looking to return a dilapidated house to its former glory and to be lived in by them as a long term family home is something the neighbourhood and planning authority should welcome.

We would like to highlight the merits of this couples' proposals as a whole and the amount of effort put in to creating the most suitable designs for this listed building. I understand that it took them over two years to research and refine the designs and we think they are a benefit to the listed building and the conservation area. The extensions they proposed and those recently refused are all modest and at garden or subterranean level, and situated at the north side of the house which had already been extended in the 1960s. Similarly their design for the art shed at the back of their garden is sensitive, at garden level and sensitively set back from surrounding properties.

We would encourage the council to grant all of Zoe and Merlins' modest proposals and accept the retrospective works to the cellar which were carried out for good reason and even benefit the listed building. Indeed Zoe and Merlin approached the council with these works for the purposes of regularising them and yet they seem to be being punished for their honesty.

I know it is usual for situations to arise on site which need addressing immediately and have an impact on original plans. Especially on an old and hacked up building like this which was originally built as an ancillary structure. I have seen the photos and plans of their cellar repairs and they make complete sense.

I find it hard to believe that given the issues related to a cellar that no one knew existed, and cannot be seen by any of the objectors that such a fuss is being made. We would urge the council to look pragmatically at these repair works and the structural benefit they provide the listed asset.

Frankly I cannot fathom why any issue is being made of any of Zoe and Merlins works. Has anyone considered the following questions;

Are the retrospective elements something that Zoe and Merlin would have expected when they commenced the works?

Does a cellar which has no light or access from the main house change the layout of the house in any material way?

Have the cellar works carried out been a cheap bodged job or have they been designed by a structural engineer and carried out at substantial cost to keep the house from falling down? (And with the historic fabric in mind?)

Has it benefitted them to design the foundations around a single tree. Or will it be at a great additional expense given that they can't use the boundary wall to support their garden extension as originally planned, and instead have to cantilever a new steel ring beam off a retaining wall at lower ground level and build a new wall inside of the boundary wall at upper ground level to now support their garden extension?

Would a void have existed under the rear extension at garden level regardless of the current approved foundation design due to the full width trench and bank that already exists along the rear of the house and beneath the existing extension?

Is the plan form legible or original at the north end of the house where the approved and refused extensions were approved? And why do the refused extensions at lower ground level harm the plan however the approved extensions at upper ground floor in the same position do not harm the plan form?

It seems to be me that all Zoe and Merlin have out of this, is a cellar which has cost a fortune to repair, which cannot be used as living space and already existed, a very expensive set of foundations designed to keep a single tree safe, and substantial delays to them being to occupy their family home together with a large rent bill whilst they wait to return to their home.

I am aware of the direct neighbours objections but I hope that the council can see through the petty and insubstantial complaints. In our opinion this is not out of concern for the grade two star listed building or the merits of Zoe and Merlin's proposed works and are more related to control.

This period of being displaced from their home especially amid COVID-19 lockdown with a baby and a four year old has been very emotionally distressing for our young neighbours who are in temporary accommodation whilst works are being regularised. We have witnessed first hand this upset and distress and have supported them through this difficult period where we could.

We encourage the council to grant consents for all of their applications which are modest and sensitive, and for the overall benefit of the listed building, which will greatly benefit from associated heritage benefits, works resuming on site and so that the house can be wind, rain and watertight as soon as possible.

Please can you copy this support letter into all of their applications (art studio, and main house amendments- to be submitted next week) and take into consideration with regards to the cellar repair too

Kind Regards,

Paul and Vanessa Crocker